



U.S., Japan to fight incinerator hazard

By Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service

ATSUGI NAVAL AIR FACILITY, Japan (NNS) — Defense Secretary William S. Cohen and Japanese Defense Minister Tsutomu Kawara have outlined an agreement to deal with a problem that has plagued Sailors, Marines and their families based here for many years.

Dioxin-bearing emissions from the Shinkampo waste-treatment facility pose a health risk to 6,000 service members and U.S. and Japanese civilian employees at this naval air facility 28 miles southwest of Tokyo. Roughly 3,000 families live in base housing directly in the path of the smoke.

U.S. officials first asked Japanese officials to resolve the situation in 1992. The United States recently expressed strong dissatisfaction about the lack of progress on the issue. Kawara visited the base March 15, a day before Cohen's scheduled visit here.

"It is clear that the status quo cannot be maintained," Cohen said March 16 after touring the base. The pollution poses "a significant health risk," he said.

"We do not expect our men and women who are serving in the military and those who are supporting them to have to incur this kind of exposure," he said. "I am confident we will have action taken. We cannot have the kind of health hazard that

our people are exposed to.

"This is a serious matter to the United States and to the Japanese as well. The question becomes what actions can be taken in the short term to reduce, if not eliminate, the hazard that's posed to all in the area," Cohen said. "If it can't be cleaned up, then it should be shut down."

After a meeting at the Japanese Defense Agency, Cohen and Kawara announced the Japanese government has agreed to changes at the facility.

These include:

See **Health**, page 4



Secretary of Defense William Cohen arrived at NAF Atsugi to see and hear first hand the issues surrounding the industrial incinerator Shinkampo and to talk to the service members stationed there.

Photo by Seaman Journalist Steve Owsley.

Navy launches culture of fitness with new standards

By Lt. Ingrid Mueller, NAVPERSCOM Public Affairs

MILLINGTON (NNS) — Goal oriented scoring. Emphasis on training progression. Tougher standards. New software to measure Fleet fitness.

Ready for the challenge?

The new Physical Readiness Program, as announced in NAVADMIN 063/00, targets individual fitness and places a renewed emphasis on command leadership to help create a culture of fitness throughout the Navy. Sailors of all ages will participate in the new

program.

"We want to establish a Navywide culture of fitness that will promote physical conditioning and commitment to a healthy lifestyle," said Admiral Jay L. Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations. "The Physical Readiness Program has essentially become an assessment tool for a Sailor's individual fitness."

The new program goes into effect May 1.

While the exercises included in the PRT have not changed, the new goal-oriented

scoring and more detailed standards help chart the track to fitness. For example, each of the scoring categories (satisfactory, good, excellent and outstanding) is divided into different sections: marginal, low, medium and high. The sections are designed so that a Sailor who follows the proper physical fitness regimen can achieve the next higher category by the next testing period.

Accordingly, the revised

See **Standards**, page 5

Navy helicopters help extinguish forest fires

By JO1 David Rush, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION ROOSEVELT ROADS, Puerto Rico (NNS) — Two UH-3H “Sea King” helicopters from Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 8 assigned to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads dispatched March 16 from the naval station to help combat a forest fire that consumed approximately 125 acres in a mountainous area of the Maricao National Forest in western Puerto Rico.

The two Navy helicopters used “Bambi Buckets” to help extinguish several fires and hotspots in the mountainous area. The Bambi Buckets, which hold approximately 300 gallons of water each, look like inverted umbrellas and are suspended from the helicopters. The water is released via push-button by an aircrewman on the helicopter.

One of the VC 8 helicopter pilots, Lt. Jeffrey H. Oesterling, said he was more than happy to help out even though it was a difficult mission. “Normally we dip the

bucket in the ocean, but for this mission we had to hover while the bucket was filled with water from fire hoses. There were a lot of power lines hidden by smoke, wind from the mountains, and two other helicopters flying in the area, so it was an interesting operation.”

As for assisting their neighbors in Puerto Rico, Oesterling was glad that VC 8 could help. “It seemed like they were glad to see us when we got there and that they were appreciative of our efforts.”

Captain Steve Shegrud, Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) commanding officer, said the request to help put out the fires became an immediate priority for Roosevelt Roads. “We cancelled the helicopter flights we had scheduled for the day and immediately sent out two helicopters from VC 8 with Bambi Buckets.”

According to Shegrud, assistance to emergencies on



UH-3H “Sea King” helicopters from Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 8 assigned to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads use “Bambi Buckets” to help extinguish fires and hotspots in the mountainous areas of Puerto Rico. U.S. Navy photo.

the island of Puerto Rico from Roosevelt Roads is just a phone call away. “We belong to the community, and with the help from the Navy and the Puerto Rican National Guard, we were able to save a lot of natural resources and endangered species in that area. Our commitment to the community and to Puerto Rico

is real and we are glad that we could be a part of the success in fighting that fire.”

Shegrud noted that personnel at VC 8 were quick to accomplish a difficult mission. “They did an excellent job. They came in thinking they were going to do one

See Fires, page 3

JFK Battle Group/Bataan ARG return home

By 2nd Fleet Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) — Sailors and Marines aboard the ships which comprise the USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) Battle Group (CVBG) and the USS *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) recently returned to their respective homeports.

USS *Bataan* (LHD 5) and USS *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41) returned to Hampton Roads March 15, following their two-day offload of Marines and

equipment from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit/ Special Operations Capable (MEU/SOC) in North Carolina. The ARG deployed in September.

Also making their return to East Coast homeports following six-month deployments are the aircraft carrier USS *John F. Kennedy*, several embarked aircraft squadrons and associated escort ships.

The six-month deploy-

ment included operations in both the Fifth and Sixth Fleet areas, three major bilateral exercises with 13 countries from Europe and the Middle East and multi-national exercises Bright Star and Noble Shirley.

Throughout the deployment, the *Bataan* ARG with the 22nd MEU served as the Strategic Reserve Force for the Balkans and supported regional security through

presence operations in the Adriatic Sea.

The mobility and flexibility of the Navy/Marine Corps lead team of the CVBG/ARG/MEU make them the force of choice for a wide range of regional contingencies. They are invaluable assets in any theater, thereby remaining an essential and integral part of America’s forward-deployed naval commitment.

Mine Warfare ships to hunt mines, recruits

By Mine Warfare Command Public Affairs

INGLESIDE, Texas (NNS) — Five Mine Force ships of Mine Countermeasures Squadron (MCMRON) 2 departed the Naval Station here recently for an extended, dual-mission deployment to the Great Lakes and up the Mississippi River, with several fleet exercises in between.

Mine countermeasures ships USS *Defender* (MCM 2) and USS *Sentry* (MCM 3), along with coastal minehunters USS *Robin* (MHC 54), USS *Kingfisher* (MHC 56) and USS *Black Hawk* (MHC 58), which make up Mine Warfare Readiness Group (MIWRG) 1, will tackle mine countermeasures and the recruiting mission during the deployment.

The group will participate in a Composite Unit Training Exercise (COMPTUEX), a Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) with the USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) Battle Group, and in the Caribbean phase of the annual UNITAS exercise.

“Operating with the fleet and our international partners from South America is an excellent opportunity for us to support the fleet engagement strategy by teaching mine countermeasures to our shipmates,” said Capt. H.L. “Buzz” Broughton, commander of MCMRON 2. “Being able to exercise like we fight is critical to our success.”

COMPTUEX is the intermediate phase, at-sea portion of the Atlantic Fleet inter-deployment training cycle (IDTC) designed to fully integrate the various parts that make up a carrier battle group. MIWRG 1 will integrate mine countermeasures, operating in the Gulf of Mexico and

Pensacola, Fla., operating areas.

During the advanced phase JTFEX, participating forces will be tested on their ability to deploy rapidly; conduct joint operations during a crisis; and refine tactics, techniques and procedures in joint force operations. JTFEX will take place in the waters off Virginia and North Carolina.

UNITAS has been held annually since 1959 and its purpose is to improve the operational readiness and interoperability of U.S. and South American naval, coast guard and Marine forces.

Following the exercises, *Sentry* and *Kingfisher* will make their way up the East Coast, through the St. Lawrence seaway and into Lake Ontario for the first of more than 30 port visits in the Great Lakes. From May through August, the ships will



USS *Kingfisher* (MHC 56).
U.S. Navy photo

help increase Navy and mine warfare mission exposure in mid-America through ship tours and interaction with local communities.

While *Kingfisher* and *Sentry* recruit in the Great Lakes, *Black Hawk* will do likewise on the Mississippi River, making seven port visits as far north as St. Louis, Mo.

Defender and *Robin* will

continue their deployment supporting fleet development of tactics along the East Coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

All of the ships are scheduled to return to Ingleside in the July–August time frame.

For more information about the Mine Warfare Command, go to <http://www.cns1.spear.navy.mil/cmwc> and join the hunt!

Navy scientists conduct oceanographic survey off Vieques

By NAVSOUTH Public Affairs

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico (NNS) — U.S. Navy scientists from the Mississippi-based Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command recently concluded ocean-bottom surveys surrounding Mosquito Pier located at the Naval Ammunition Support Detachment in Western Vieques.

This was a precursor to the eventual transfer of the pier complex from the Department of the Navy to the Government of Puerto Rico later this year. The

underwater survey data will provide navigation information to update nautical charts, thereby supporting plans for a high speed ferry service from Fajardo and potential cruise ship visits, as well as providing fishermen with updated fishing bed locations.

Two 34-foot hydrographic survey launches operating from the Navy’s newest oceanographic survey ship, the 329-foot USNS *Henson* (T-AGS 63), used the latest digital side-scan sonar to accurately

verify depths and underwater obstacles.

The survey will provide precise data to update the position of buoys and any underwater obstructions, bottom conditions and seawater temperature gradients. The temperature gradient graphs will enable fishermen to more accurately predict the location of schools of fish.

To learn more about the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico, go to <http://www.navstarr.navy.mil>

Health, con't. from page 1

- Ensuring the facility owner finishes installing special filters on two of its three incinerators by the end of March and stops operating the third incinerator until a filter is installed.

- Conducting joint monitoring to survey the air as long as both sides deem it necessary.

- Building a 100-meter-tall smokestack.

- Conducting on-site inspections and taking appropriate measures if problems are found.

- Providing U.S. service members and dependents no-cost alternative housing pending completion of the smokestack.

"This is the Navy's biggest headache in Japan," Navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Jamie Graybeal told reporters traveling with Cohen. "The incinerators sit in a 13-meter deep valley and the three stacks are 27 meters tall," he explained. "Consequently, the stack emissions blow across the housing facility at about the third-story level."

The emissions carry chemicals known to cause cancer and upper respiratory disease, Graybeal said. A joint U.S.-Japan monitoring survey last summer found record-setting levels of dioxins, up to nearly 70 times the level set by Japan's environmental standards, he said.

The plant burns twice its permitted daily 90-ton capacity and it burns the waste at low temperatures. "Dioxins are caused not by a particular substance, but by incomplete combustion," Graybeal said.

Six months out of the year, during the summer, the winds blow directly toward

the base and "fumigate" on-base housing, he said. The winds shift the other six months and blow the plume into the Japanese industrial park and Japanese residences.

U.S. service members accompanied by their families generally serve three-year tours at Atsugi. Offered the option of living off-base, most choose to stay on base despite the pollution problem, Graybeal said.

"The living conditions in government housing are far better than in town," he said. "There's more square footage, and they're cheaper to heat — electricity is very expensive here and there's no insulation. Rarely is there anywhere in the neighborhood for kids to play.

They've got to commute to school. So for a number of those reasons, people find it more convenient to live here on base."

The Navy provides air-filtering equipment to help combat the pollution. Parents keep their children indoors when the wind is blowing the plume on base.

Parents also worry about the long-term effects of living at Atsugi on their children. People who live in the government quarters about 250 meters from the plant say they experience headaches, breathing problems, skin rashes, nausea and eye, nose and throat irritation.

Navy health officials are in the process of doing a comprehensive health assessment. They plan to release results this summer that "will articulate the actual health risk our residents are facing," Graybeal said.

Determined Warrior



The U.S. crew departs and a Polish sailor stands ready to hoist his nation's flag as USS Clark (FFG 11) is decommissioned and transferred to the Polish navy at the Norfolk, Va., Naval Base after 20 years of service in the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. The ship will become the second-largest in the Polish navy.

U.S. Navy photo by Christopher Pastol.

Fires, con't. from page 2

thing and within a half-hour they were fueled and prepared to do a completely different mission. Their training and skills are just remarkable, whether it's a search and rescue, a medivac, an operational mission, or helping to put out a forest fire," Shegrud said.

In addition to Navy helicopters, a helicopter from the Puerto Rican National Guard also dropped water on the fires. There were also 30 firefighters from the Mayaguez and Aguadilla Fire Departments, 60 Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) and 40 Civil Defense personnel.

The difficult terrain made it hard to combat the flames from the ground. According to Francisco Aviles Zapata, Mayaguez supervisor for the DNER, the water drops from the helicopters were instrumental in containing the fires. "It gives us the ability to

accomplish the job much quicker. I thank the Navy very much for their help and hope to have them here again if we need them."

Jose Candelario, U.S. Forest Service fire management officer, said the Navy's assistance made a positive impact. "Even after we dropped 21,000 gallons with the help from the Puerto Rican National Guard yesterday, I realized we (the U.S. Forest Service and DNER) needed more help. That's when we called Navy officials at Roosevelt Roads. Thanks to them we were able to protect the natural resources. They were invaluable."

The Navy made approximately 50 water drops, totaling more than 15,000 gallons of water.

For more information about the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico, go to: <http://www.navstarr.navy.mil>

Standards, con't. from page 1

plan encourages commanding officers to recognize Sailors who progress to the next higher category through fitness report and evaluation comments. In the past, only those who scored outstanding or excellent received comments. Promotion, advancement, frocking and redesignation requirements will be based on meeting fitness progression standards, rather than failing the test. Previous PRT failures will not be carried forward under the new program. Details on the progression standards will be included in the revised instruction.

Overall performance on the fitness test will be determined by the lowest category level of performance attained for any exercise event. For example, a Sailor who scores "outstanding" on two events and "good" on the third event will achieve an overall score of "good." However, a minimum overall score of "excellent" or "outstanding" is no longer required to be eligible for a fitness report or evaluation grade of 5.0 in

military bearing.

The new Navy culture of fitness will require a consistent commitment by the individual member to a healthy lifestyle.

"This program is a measured step forward that will result in fitter Sailors, higher morale and enhanced readiness," said Johnson. "It is a leadership responsibility to promote a culture of fitness that will help Sailors succeed."

The Personal Readiness and Community Support Division (PERS-6) at Navy Personnel Command has developed new software to make record keeping easier.

"The pink folders will be digitized, and commanding officers will be able to get a complete picture of their command's overall physical fitness and readiness, as well as their individual Sailors," explained Capt. T.J. Cepak, Director, Navy Drug & Alcohol, Fitness, Education & Partnerships Division (PERS-60).

The Navy is committed to helping Sailors make healthy lifestyle changes. For those



The new Physical Readiness Program emphasis is on training progression rather than the pass/fail of past years. U.S. Navy photo.

Sailors who want to improve at all levels, the Command Fitness Leader will be available to help design a personalized program to achieve a higher level of fitness. Commands will establish and direct Fitness Enhancement Programs (FEP) to monitor the training and progression of Sailors, and will also offer nutrition and weight management counseling if necessary. For Sailors who are struggling to meet standards,

FEP will be mandatory.

For more information, please see NAVADMIN 063/00. Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the BUPERS/Navy Personnel Command web page at <http://www.bupers.navy.mil/pers6/pers60/pers601>.

The office to contact for information about the Navy's Physical Fitness Program is PERS-601, at (901) 874-4257/43 or DSN 882.

On Navy/Marine Corps News

Look for the following stories and more on next week's show:

- * The *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group comes home to Norfolk after a six month deployment to the Mediterranean.

- * Sailors from USS *Gonzalez* and USS *Dewert* take part in one of the largest St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the country.

- * March is Women's History Month. Take a look at the history of women in the Navy and Marine Corps.

- * USS *Abraham Lincoln* Sailors stay fit while underway in a new gym suspended over the hangar bay.

Compiled on tape #2000-13, the show is on its way to the fleet now.

In naval history: March 31, 1992

The last active American battleship, USS *Missouri* (BB 63), was decommissioned for the second and final time. On May 4, 1998, Secretary of the Navy John Dalton signed the donation contract to officially transfer the ship to the USS *Missouri* Association in Hawaii.

Submarine Centennial History: March 31, 1971

The *Poseidon* (C-3) missile, the first type to carry multiple warheads, became operational when USS *James Madison* (SSBN 627) began its third patrol carrying 16 of the tactical ballistic weapons. In 1978, The *Trident I* (C-4) replaced the *Poseidon* missile in the Navy's inventory. The Navy currently uses *Trident II* (D-5).

NAVNEWS, a weekly publication containing stories of fleetwide interest, is an official product of the Naval Media Center.

The desktop version of NavNews can be accessed on the Navy Home Page: www.navy.mil. E-mail stories submissions to: pubs@mediacen.navy.mil or call NavNews at (703)695-0911; DSN 225-0911.

